

From: The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

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THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, IF YOU CATCH A BUZZ, CATCH A RIDE

*Highway Safety and Law Enforcement Officials Remind Everyone
to Designate a Sober Driver Before All Holiday Events*

December 7, 2005 – The holiday season between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Eve is one of the busiest on the nation’s roadways and also one of the most dangerous, due to a high incidence of alcohol-related traffic crashes.

That’s why the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Jo CHA is joining with other national, state and local highway safety and law enforcement officials to remind everyone this holiday season to always designate a sober driver before each holiday party or event involving alcohol.

Nationally, more than 17,000 people died in alcohol-related highway crashes during 2003. Locally, from 2002- 2004, Branch County had 22 deaths, 9 of which were alcohol related (41%), Hillsdale County had 30 deaths, 13 alcohol related (33%) and St. Joseph County had 41 deaths, 11, also, alcohol related (27%). In addition, during the same time period the tri-county area experienced a total of 460 alcohol related injuries (Branch- 108, Hillsdale- 153, and St. Joseph-199).

Designating a sober driver before the party begins is just one of several, simple steps to remember to help avoid a tragic crash or an arrest for impaired driving, while offering these other simple reminders for a safer holiday season:

- Don’t even think about getting behind the wheel of your vehicle if you’ve been out drinking;
- If you are impaired, call a taxi – use mass transit – or get a sober friend or family member to come and get you;
- Or just stay where you are and sleep it off until you are sober;
- And remember – *Friends Don’t Let Friends Drive Drunk.*

For more information contact the Branch Hillsdale St. Joseph Community Health Agency at: 517-279-9561. 123 or visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s website:

www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/alcohol/StopImpaired/HolidayPlanner/index.htm

Branch – Hillsdale – St. Joseph Community Health Agency

You local Public Health Department

For more, visit us at

www.bhsj.org